

Fact Sheet: *Advanced Metering*

Evansville Water & Light

What is advanced metering?

Advanced metering technology uses a communications link that makes it easier for utilities and their customers to access information from the electric meter.

Why are utilities pursuing advanced metering?

In most regions of the United States, key electric utility infrastructure is aging and in need of upgrades to keep up with our nation's growing and changing power needs. One improvement utilities are making to address these needs is to install advanced meters.

The use of advanced meters can help utilities make the process of meter reading more efficient and accurate. It can also help the utility to better manage overall energy needs and quickly detect power outages as they happen.

In addition, the technology can be used to provide customers with information to help them make more informed decisions about how and when they incur charges for using electricity. In the future, it will become more and more common for utilities to use these meters to provide customers with the same type of access to their billing and usage information that they currently receive online through their banks, mobile phone service providers, and credit card companies.

How do advanced meters work?

Advanced meters receive and transmit customer energy usage information at regular intervals. The data can then be used for utility operations, resource planning, billing and customer service.

Is Evansville Water & Light installing advanced meters in our community?

No. At present, most of the 4,000 homes and businesses on our locally owned municipal utility system are served by an older, electromechanical meter technology. These meters adequately meet the community's needs at this time.

Will Evansville Water & Light use advanced meters in the future?

As our current meters age, and as old technology is phased out, advanced meters may eventually be the right choice for our community. In Wisconsin, utilities must physically inspect and test each

electric customer's meter every 20 years. Some have found it cost-effective to upgrade customers' meters during this process, while workers are already making the required visit. Other utilities may make a shift to advanced metering as a result of employee retirements, where the technology could be deployed in place of hiring new meter readers. But, at present, no advanced-metering plans are underway for Evansville Water & Light.

Is the utility planning now for this transition?

Advanced metering is the way of the future, but implementing such a system is a considerable undertaking. While there are no advanced metering efforts currently underway, we are taking careful steps to be prepared should our local needs should call for the use of this technology in the future.

This includes ensuring that any purchasing decisions we make today won't unnecessarily preclude our community from taking advantage of advanced metering in the future. Recently, with a grant and zero-interest financing from our nonprofit power supplier, WPPI Energy, our utility upgraded its accounting and billing software. We made sure that the software we selected would be capable of meeting any future advanced-metering data needs. This purchase also provided immediate benefits including a net savings on annual accounting and billing system maintenance fees, and the opportunity to improve efficiency by streamlining our databases and office procedures.

We are also working with 50 other locally owned, nonprofit utilities to ensure that we're prepared for the future. Together, the member utilities of WPPI Energy have formed a task force to plan for this industry change in a manner that would help us cost-effectively deliver the benefits and efficiencies that advanced metering technology can offer. Working together with other like-minded communities can help us to do together what would be expensive and difficult for Evansville to do alone.

Going forward, we know that operational efficiencies and cost controls will be essential tools for helping to serve Evansville customers as cost-effectively as possible in the rapidly changing utility industry. As the significant technological shift toward advanced metering continues to emerge, our local utility will remain focused on careful evaluation and informed decision making to position our community well now and for the future.